



Friends of Accotink Creek Leadership Town Meeting

November 19, 2012

Next Meeting: Dec 17, 2012 Audrey Moore Rec Center, Senior Center Lobby
(Third Monday of each month)

Scheduled Guest: Danielle Wynne, Stormwater Planning Division

Present:

Kris Unger

Philip Latasa

Bill Nell

Suzy Foster

Flint Webb

Ted Welch

Robert Greenberg

Roger Diedrich

Ashiq Yusuf

Sandy Collins Welcome, Sandy!

Guest Speaker –

Vivian Morgan-Mendez and Fernando Mendez of Friends of Nottoway discussed their past and present efforts to preserve and enhance the natural areas of Nottoway Park, at the northern edge of the Accotink Creek watershed.

- The Nottoway Saga – A 13-year odyssey to protect the woods of Nottoway Park seems to be near a favorable conclusion. A 1999 request to Supervisor Connolly to purchase the woods for inclusion in the park became a Park Authority plan for putting a maintenance facility on the site. Opposition petitions got 3600 signatures from neighbors. Local papers took notice. All local candidates for any office whatsoever were contacted. A site survey located remains of an 1850's house, leading the Planning Commission to request the Park Authority to register the area as a state cultural resource. The Park Authority diverted the maintenance facility to Oak Marr. Sports leagues then took interest and for a time sports advocates outnumbered "tree people" at public meetings. A proposal made by advocates of the woods to convert one baseball diamond to a rectangular field finally took hold. At the recent park master plan meeting all comments were favorable to preserving the woods. This will be the first time ever in Fairfax County that woods have been saved from conversion to athletic fields
- I.M.A. - Friends of Nottoway has slowly worked up to removing invasive alien plant species on about six acres. Nearly 500 volunteers joined the effort this year, including corporate groups from nearby ICF Environmental. Ted & Flint offered the suggestion to recognize volunteers by kiosk photos and in supervisors' newsletters.
- Stormwater - Upstream from Nottoway Park are single family neighborhoods and a Moose Lodge with no stormwater controls. A VDOT stormwater collector is not working at it should. Erosion damage is evident in the park. Tropical storms Irene and Lee were particularly bad. The Moose Lodge is being rezoned to townhouses – an opportunity for improvement and it is already an item in the 25 year Accotink Watershed Plan. Supervisor Smythe is looking at stormwater controls in the park, but upstream controls would be better. It seems the Park

Authority does not complain about stormwater damage from upstream anywhere. Discussion followed:

- Suzy suggested a meeting in the park with Stormwater Planning and Park Authority
- Kris suggested involving NVSWCD and Fairfax County Restoration Project may be helpful.
- Bill mentioned that rezoning requires stormwater management. He also noted there may be interest in retrofit of the wet pond at I-66 & Nutley Street, perhaps converting it to a dry pond. It is now filling up with sediment from Nottoway. Fernando observed the ducks are now often walking on sediment instead of swimming.

Subjects Discussed –

Follow up on Action Items from previous meetings:

· Wakefield Run/Americana CCT Paving

We expect the Park Authority to attend our January meeting and make a presentation about these projects. This raises again the issue of the Park Authority doing paving without mitigation.

Philip reported there was not much progress in our recent meeting in Americana Park because the Park Authority stood fast to its paving plans and it was only because the Stormwater Planning Division offered to fund a stormwater control facility in connection with the paving that any mitigation will occur. Discussion included:

- Kris noted that visible “improvements” justify budgets.
- Suzy thought there must be a balance between the need for paths in parks and mitigation for them.
- Roger echoed Suzy’s thought and suggested mitigation dollars should equal paving dollars. Roger also noted paved trails become poor riding surfaces if not well maintained.
- Ted observed the survival chances of pavement in the often flooded area of Wakefield Park may not be good.
- Bill mentioned paving may be a waste of money in Wakefield Park because so many riders go off-trail. On the Americana paving, Bill suggested proposing a 365 day moratorium while FACC uses one tenth of the budgeted funds to do a low-impact alternative approach.

· House being constructed over the headwaters

There will be a meeting at the site Nov. 28th at 9:30 attended by the county arborist to deal with tree-loss issues.

· MetroWest Sediment Violation

Andres was not present, but Kris summarized how Andres had gotten a good response from DPWES to his report of erosion control problems at this construction site. Andres and Kris will do a written report.

Ted added information about the problems nearby with the upgrade to the Walgreens stormwater pond. Workers left the worksite unvegetated and unprotected during Sandy. There seemed to be no awareness among the workers Ted spoke to about any need for sediment protection around the inlet inside the pond. The next day they were already replanting. A worker Ted spoke to after the storm told

him Sandy had saved them work by washing away much of the soil they would have had to excavate. Ted will try to document sediment escape downstream.

·Duane Murphy's Departure

The December 8th stream monitoring session is approaching, but it is not clear who take up the leadership of this site. Several persons are interested, but may not have certification. We shall see what happens.

Reports on current projects:

·Scout Projects

Ted reported Katie Keating's Girl Scout Gold project of repairs to the Woodlark Road information kiosk will take place Nov. 24th, beginning approximately 9:00 am. Katie and her volunteers will also create materials to place in the kiosk recognizing those who contributed to the project and providing information on invasive species.

Two other Eagle project inquiries have fallen by the wayside, victims of excess expectations by parents.

New Discussion:

· Video Production

Postponed due to schedule mix-up with our guest. However, the discussion is open to any of us who are interested in coming together now to develop ideas.

· Wildlife Recycling

Ted regaled us with the tale of his recovery of a road-kill deer from the creek in Sally Ormsby Park. The deer now resides in Ted's compost pile, with plans to later exhume the bones, sanitize them, and use them as a learning project at his grandchildren's school.

·Erosion Monitor

Ted also described his plans to monitor erosion in Americana Park by embedding a rod horizontally in the bank. Ashiq and Bill will provide information on related professional erosion monitoring tools.

· Community Update on Watershed Management Plans Nov. 29, 2012

Philip mentioned this meeting will discuss the status of the watershed plans Fairfax County has prepared for all the watersheds in the county. It's not clear of what value it may be, but may provide an opportunity to advance some of our concerns.

· Fort Belvoir Community Involvement Program

Philip met with contractor representatives, but it was a pro forma act to fulfill a legal requirement that Belvoir obtain community feedback on the quality of their public communication, largely confined to the issues of ordnance disposal and soil contaminant cleanup.

· Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable

Flint announced the Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable, introduction to water quality regulations affecting urban trees, Thursday, Dec. 6

·Eleven Oaks Development

Suzy mentioned the Eleven Oaks development is planning to handle stormwater management by sending all its runoff to a new pond on the GMU campus the university wants to fill.

This led into a broader discussion of how to influence developments in the direction of better watershed stewardship as early as possible in the process. Flint mentioned the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals calendars as means of being alerted to development plans. Several persons suggested we would need some sort of standard “talking points” or “ask” to present to concerned parties. Suggestions for these points included: financial benefits of better BMP’s, controlling runoff onsite, controlling sediment onsite, preservation of vegetation, and controlling for higher-flow rainstorm runoff.

Roger also suggested talking points such as “Your argument is you should do the least to get by?” “We see the problem – you tell us the solution.”

Kris pointed out that such involvement by community groups often aids county staff to coax a bit more cooperation out of developers.

Bill tossed a bit of cold water on the discussion by pointing out the difficulty of knowing what will actually work, since it seems every ten years, the “latest and greatest” is tried, and then found wanting. Bill also noted the most erosion is generally held to be caused by lower-flow rainstorms, whose energy is focused within the banks.

Upcoming events:

- Katie Keating Girl Scout Gold project, Nov. 24 – Ted will attend
- Community Update on Stormwater Management, Nov. 29 7:00 p.m. Rooms 9/10 Government Center
- Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Roundtable, Dec. 6th, 9:30 am Fortnightly Library Herndon
- Stream Monitoring, December 8th – All are welcome.

Philip Latasa

Friends of Accotink Creek